Great Opening Lines:

**Opener:** “Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendía was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice.”

**Book:** One Hundred Years of Solitude

**Author:** Gabriel García Márquez

**Creative Thought Process:** Before getting into that whole “ice” thing, unceremoniously mention that Buendía eventually has to stare down a firing squad. That’ll buy at least a hundred pages of curiosity.

**Opener:** “It was a pleasure to burn.”

**Book:** [Fahrenheit 451](http://www.shmoop.com/fahrenheit-451/)

**Author:** Ray Bradbury

**Creative Thought Process:** Juxtapose the anarchic verb “to burn” with an alluring noun like “pleasure.” Hope a major cigarette company doesn’t steal the phrase some forty years down the road.

**Opener:** “It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen.”

**Book:** [1984](http://www.shmoop.com/1984/)

**Author:** [George Orwell](http://www.shmoop.com/george-orwell/)

**Creative Thought Process:** To properly set the mood for a futuristic dystopia, combine the elements of springtime, coldness, an unlucky number, and bells tolling. Then, watch people fight over the feasibility of a clock that can strike thirteen.

**Opener:** “In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort.”

**Book:** The Hobbit

**Author:** J.R.R. Tolkien

**Creative Thought Process:** In the interest of thoroughness, approach the most epic alternate universe in all of literature by starting with a hole in the ground.

**Opener:** “The sky above the port was the color of television, tuned to a dead channel.”

**Book:** Neuromancer

**Author:** William Gibson

**Creative Thought Process:** Methinks I shall write the greatest opening line ever. Donesies.

**Opener:** “Call me Ishmael.”

**Book:** [Moby-Dick](http://www.shmoop.com/moby-dick/)

**Author:** [Herman Melville](http://www.shmoop.com/herman-melville/)

**Creative Thought Process:** Well, you should probably include at least one short sentence.

**Opener:** “It was the day my grandmother exploded.”

**Book:** The Crow Road

**Author:** Iain Banks

**Creative Thought Process:** Open with a bang. Scratch that – open with a violent human combustion. See where it takes you…

**Opener:** “Far out in the uncharted backwaters of the unfashionable end of the Western Spiral arm of the Galaxy lies a small unregarded yellow sun. Orbiting this at a distance of roughly ninety-eight million miles is an utterly insignificant little blue-green planet whose ape-descended life forms are so amazingly primitive that they still think digital watches are a pretty neat idea.”

**Book:** The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy

**Author:** Douglas Adams

**Creative Thought Process:** Put the readers in their place. You know, light-eons away from anything of significance.

**Opener:** “The letter that would change everything arrived on a Tuesday.”

**Book:** The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry

**Author:** Rachel Joyce

**Creative Thought Process:** Plenty of intrigue because everyone knows nothing ever exciting happens on a Tuesday.

**Opener:** “After a while, everything started to blur.”

**Book:** The Empty Glass

**Author:** J.I. Baker

**Creative Thought Process:** Life begins to blur after a long time, or does he mean the character was drunk?

**Opener:** “Every morning I drink coffee out of a mug that I took from my mother’s house.”

**Book:** The Secret Life of Objects

**Author:** Dawn Raffel

**Creative Thought Process:** She took it? But stealing is bad, and stealing from your mother must be even more vile.

**Opener:** “The man in black fled across the desert, and the gunslinger followed.”

**Book:** The Gunslinger

**Author:** Stephen King

**Creative Thought Process:** Desert, gunslinger, man in black, despair, epic chase . . . all in 12 words.

**Opener:** “The building was on fire, and it wasn’t my fault.”

**Book:** Blood Rites

**Author:** Jim Butcher

**Creative Thought Process:** He must know who started the fire? Conveys action.

**Opener:** “Where’s papa going with that axe?”

**Book:** Charlotte’s Web

**Author:** EB White

**Creative Thought Process:** A small child sees her father with an axe in a story about a pig. . . oh oh, this can’t be good.